

Museum of New York, that in the British Museum (ex coll. Salvin and Godman), and my own are the only representatives of this rare Humming-bird in our collections of natural history.

---

VI.—Notes on some Specimens of Anatidæ in the late Count Ninni's Collection. By Prof. ETTORE ARRIGONI DEGLI ODDI.

THE much-lamented Count Alexander P. Ninni, a name dear to naturalists of every country, left his rich collections of natural history to the city of Venice, where they were consigned to the Correr Museum. The most remarkable part of them is the series of birds, which consists of about one thousand specimens, illustrative of the avifauna of the province of Venice. But several rare specimens have most unfortunately been lost through the carelessness of those to whom they were entrusted. Among these are an example of *Ædemia nigra*, of which only the head is left, and an example of a cross between *Anas boschas* and *Chaulelasmus streperus* destroyed by moths. In fact it is owing to the indefatigable activity and intelligence of my friend Prof. Joseph Scarpa, appointed by the city of Venice to put the collections into order, that they have escaped further loss.

The greater number of the specimens in this collection are unfortunately without date and locality. It is, however, certain that they were all obtained in the Venetian estuary and the adjoining seas within the last few years. Count Ninni had many correspondents who brought him everything interesting they met with, among whom I may mention Giovanni Minotto, a preparator and punt-gunner. Although not gifted with knowledge acquired from books, Minotto is endowed with great natural ability, and was a coadjutor of Count Ninni's of no little importance, and since the latter's death he has been very useful to me in collecting and mounting birds for my museum.

The Anatidæ, consisting of about one hundred specimens, are the most largely represented family in the collection, and

I think it convenient to take this group into consideration first.

1. TADORNA CORNUTA. (Venetian name "*Cherso*.")

A rare species in the Venetian estuary, where it generally appears at the time of migration in winter, but it has also been seen in the months of July and August. Formerly it was more common.

2. ANAS BOSCAS. (Venetian name "*Mazzorin*" ♂, "*Anara*" ♀.)

The Mallard is common in Venetian territory, where it is also a resident, but the number increases wonderfully in winter on account of the large flocks from the north, which arrive in the month of November and leave in February. It breeds commonly in our regions, but formerly its breeding-places were much more numerous. In August many adult males are killed, and this is the time of its moulting-plumage; one in this condition of plumage is in the collection, but such specimens are rare in our Italian museums.

3. MARECA PENELOPE. (Venetian name "*Ciosso*" ♂, "*Ciossa*" ♀.)

The Wigeon is the most common of the Ducks that frequent the estuary. It is an autumn bird, passing between August 20th and November 20th, and returning between March 2nd and April 30th. Sometimes we see large flocks of Wigeon in the lagoons, principally composed of young birds in their first nuptial dress. They are commonly called *Ciossi di baro*, the *baro* being the *Zostera marina*, a seaweed on which they feed. This bird very seldom breeds in this country.

4. DAFILA ACUTA. (Venetian name "*Asia*" ♂, "*Asiada*" ♀, "*Colanzi*.")

The Pintail is a common species in the Venetian territory as an autumn bird, passing between August 15th and September 30th, and between March 15th and April 30th. It is also sometimes seen in May, but seldom. Naccari, in his '*Ornitologia Veneta*,' states that this species breeds in our district, but this is doubtful.

5. FULIGULA RUFINA. (Venetian name "*Ciosso turco.*")

The Red-crested Pochard is a rare bird which appears in Venetia in November and in the months of March and April. It frequents large spaces of water in the lagoons and sea. Some are killed every year. I have three in my collection, and every Venetian museum has specimens obtained in these regions. Even while I am writing (April), I have heard of a specimen having been lately caught in the estuary. It has been stuffed by G. Minotto, who was my informant, and is now in the possession of Mr. G. Voltolina at Chioggia.

6. FULIGULA MARILA. (Venetian names "*Magasso de la schena zenarina,*" "*Moretōn.*")

The Scaup is neither common nor very rare; it appears at the time of migration and in winter. I have killed several individuals, and have some twenty specimens in my collection. It frequents large expanses of water, and prefers the deep places where seaweeds abound. It lives in flocks along with the Common Pochard and Tufted Duck.

7. FULIGULA FERINA. (Venetian name "*Magassōn,*" "*Magassōn dal fero,*" "*Magassōn monàro.*")

The Common Pochard is more abundant than the Tufted Duck in this country; it appears towards the 15th of September, but I have killed specimens in August. The birds that remain with us during the winter depart in February, at which time immigrants arrive; the latter occasionally defer their departure from our waters till April. Sometimes the Venetian lagoons are frequented by immense quantities of Pochards. They live in flocks on the large and deep expanses of water where seaweeds and vegetation of all kinds abound. The cold and ice do not affect them, but they leave us as soon as the warm weather comes on. Like other Ducks, they are an object of active and profitable pursuit, but their flesh is not delicate. This species does not breed with us.

8. CEdEMIA FUSCA. (Venetian name "*Orco marin.*")

The Velvet Scoter, as Count Ninni says \*, is certainly less

\* Atti R. Ist. Ven. ser. 6, t. iii. p. 223 (1885).

common than the Gadwall and Ferruginous Duck, but it appears every year in our lagoons and especially in the sea, more frequently than the Common Sheld-duck and the Goosander. It is seen in autumn and in winter. It begins to arrive in October—the several specimens in my collection were killed between October and January,—but Count Contarini \* says that individuals have been killed in April and May. As a young bird the Velvet Scoter is not very uncommon, but males in full plumage are rare, and I do not possess a specimen of the latter in my collection. Count Ninni calculated that in 1885 no less than fifty of these birds were obtained in this country; but if the calculation was correct at that time it certainly is not now, and the species has become much less frequent.

9. ŒDEmia NIGRA. (Venetian name “*Orchèto marin.*”)

Count Ninni † did not hesitate to say that the Common Scoter is a rare bird in the Venetian province, and in fact it appears very seldom and quite as a straggler among us. It has been seen in winter between October and April. Count Contarini says ‡ that individuals have been killed in May, but there is no proof that this assertion is correct. Count Ninni procured two in 1884 (*in litt.*), and probably the head in his collection belonged to one of them. After that date an adult male in full breeding-plumage was killed on the Lago di Garda near Pacengo on April 7th, 1888; this was stuffed by V. Dal Nero and is now in the possession of Count Fratta at Lasiza.

In 1885 G. Minotto killed three specimens in November on our lagoons, two of which, a young male and an adult female, came into my possession; the third—a young bird—is in the Museo Scarpa at Treviso. Three other specimens were seen between the 14th and 22nd of October of the same year in the lagoons at “Sette Morti” and in the sea near S. Elisabetta de Lido, but it was not possible to get near

\* ‘Venezia e le sue lagune,’ vol. ii. p. 222 (1847).

† Prov. d. Venezia, Monogr. st. econ. anim., etc. del Conte Sormani Moretti, Venezia, 1880–81.

‡ *Z. c.* p. 196.

them on account of the rough weather. These are the only authentic captures of this Duck that I know of in the Venetian region. The Common Scoter is one of the rarest Italian species; in the province of Cremona it has perhaps occurred more frequently, and within the last few days Mr. Ferragne has informed me that, where the river Adda flows into the Po, he met with two specimens—a male and a female—on the 9th of April, which he was unable to get at, but which were subsequently killed by a punt-gunner, who brought them to him to be stuffed. These two specimens are now in my collection.

10. *HARELDA GLACIALIS*. (Venetian name “*Orchèto marin*,” “*Anara da la coa longa*.”).

This species in young plumage is not very rare in the Venetian estuary, but adults, especially males\* in full winter-plumage and in spring nuptial dress, are seldom seen, though they occur at times. The species is more often met with in the very cold weather, when it frequents the sea and open lagoons rather than the “valli.” I have in my collection fourteen specimens taken on our coasts between October and January, among which are two magnificent males in full plumage. It has more commonly been killed in October than during migration in the spring. In 1887 there was an extraordinary flight of this species in the Venetian estuary during the months of October and November, more than one hundred specimens being captured; but after that period few were observed. I have occasionally seen some Long-tailed Ducks on our lagoons. They are not very shy and are easily approached. They often dive and reappear on the surface of the water at no great distance; if closely pursued they take to flight, but soon rest again on the water. They can remain under water for a long time, much longer than the Goldeneye, and almost as long as the Grebes and Divers. Their flight is very rapid and sinuous, and they

\* The last adult male of which I know was killed on the lagoon on the 13th December last and taken to Count Emile Ninni, the son of Count Alexander. The former stuffed the bird himself, and it is now in his collection at Venice.

often flap their short wings and alter their direction by turning their bodies from side to side. While swimming they continually fish, and prefer to stay where the water is the deepest and where the flow is the most rapid. They feed on small fishes and on seaweeds, such as *Zostera marina*, *Z. nana*, and *Ruppia maritima*.

#### 11. SOMATERIA MOLLISSIMA.

Only two specimens of the Eider Duck have been obtained in the Venetian estuary—namely, a male and a female by Count Ninni in 1882. The former was killed at the mouth of the port of Tre Porti on the 1st October, and the latter in the lagoon on the 20th November. Some days after, *i. e.* December 25th, a third was seen in company with several Velvet Scoters.

The Common Eider is a straggler and rarely seen in the Venetian or any other part of the Italian dominions. It has appeared between October and April, and generally in young plumage. The specimens in Count Camozzi's collection at Bergamo, and Dal Fiume's collection at Badia Polesina, labelled as coming from Venice and Lecco respectively, cannot positively be said to have been obtained in Italy. The Eider is exclusively a shore-bird, and very seldom forsakes the sea-coast in its migrations.

#### 12. SOMATERIA SPECTABILIS.

The splendid specimen of the King-Eider in Count Ninni's collection is, so far as I know, the only one that has been killed in Italy. It was obtained on the 21st August, 1888, at the "Pignatelle"\*, by the punt-gunner G. Minotto. The stomach was full of remains of crabs (*Carcinus menas*). Minotto observed that the bird was not at all shy, and that to feed it dived and reappeared on the surface of the water after a somewhat long interval, after the manner of the Goldeneye. The sternum, with the trachea, of this bird was given by Count Ninni to the Museum at Florence. Count Ninni and the well-known authority Prof. Giglioli† believe that the specimen is a

\* Ninni, Boll. Nat. viii. p. 137 (1888).

† Cf. Avif. Ital. i. p. 493 (1889).

young male, but I am inclined to think that it is an adult male in moulting-dress, on account of the considerable development of the shields at the base of the bill. The most southern specimen of the King-Eider previously killed in Europe appears to be that obtained near Boulogne, and mentioned by Degland and Gerbe\*. The species is rare even in England and Scandinavia, and from what authors say it seems to be altogether an Arctic bird.

13. ERISMATURA LEUCOCEPHALA. (Venetian name "*Magasseto foresto*."")

The White-headed Duck is very rare in the Venetian estuary; it appears in winter and at the periods of migration, but always as a straggler. I procured one from the territory of Padua on the 25th February, 1884, and two on the 25th February, 1896, which were killed in the estuary in the channel of "*Piove*," opposite my hunting-quarters in the "*Valle Zappa*," by the gamekeeper C. Framonte. The last-named specimens (male and female) are both very fine; they have been stuffed by Mr. H. Bonomi, of Milan, and are now in my collection, along with a specimen obtained in 1884 and with others from Sardinia.

This species is not generally distributed over Italy; it is often met with in Sicily and Sardinia, where it breeds, and where it seems to be a resident as well as a migrant; it is also seen in the great marshes of the Capitanata and in the salt-lagoons of Barletta, where it most probably breeds, but this cannot be stated with certainty. In many other parts of Italy it is a very rare bird, and the further north we go the more it becomes simply a straggler.

14. MERGUS MERGANSER. (Venetian name "*Serolon de Po*," "*Serolon oca*."")

The Goosander is a rare bird in the Venetian lagoon, and is not met with every year. Young specimens are the most common. It prefers the sea and open lagoon, where the water is deep, and is most frequently seen between the months of October and December, but it occurs sometimes

\* Orn. Eur. ed. 2, ii. p. 559 (1867).

after this period. Mr. V. Dal Nero, a keen observer, writes to me that a male in nuptial plumage was caught on the 16th May, 1887, on the Lake of Garda, and was stuffed by him. I have in my possession a male and a female killed in this country in October and November, and the last specimen obtained in our neighbourhood was on the 19th March, 1895. This is an adult male, stuffed by G. Minotto, and is now in a private collection in Venice.

VII.—*An Ornithological Expedition to the Cape Verde Islands.* By BOYD ALEXANDER.

(Plate III.)

CONTENTS.

	Page
I. Introduction .....	74
II. Santiago .....	76
III. List of the Birds of Santiago .....	79
IV. Brava .....	90
V. List of the Birds of Brava .....	90
VI. The Rombos Islands .....	94
VII. List of the Birds of the Rombos Islands .....	97
VIII. List of the Birds of São Vicente .....	99
IX. São Nicolau .....	100
X. List of the Birds of São Nicolau .....	103
XI. The Desertas.....	105
XII. List of the Birds of Raza .....	107
XIII. Branca, Santa Luzia, Sal, and Boavista.....	109
XIV. List of the Birds of Boavista .....	111
XV. Complete List of the Birds of the Cape Verde Islands ....	114

I. *Introduction.*

ALTHOUGH Dr. Dohrn and Mr. Keulemans have recorded the results of their observations from the Cape Verde Islands in the 'Journal für Ornithologie' for 1871, it has long been felt, among those interested in the African Avifauna, that a further and more systematic working of the Islands would reveal many interesting facts. With this object in view, I left Liverpool on February 28th, 1897, for São Vicente, accompanied by a friend, Mr. John Duncan, and two skinners (Ramm of Cley, and Griffin of Tunbridge Wells).